

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 11048 131626Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6301

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11048

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, UR, US

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL PROTEST ON AEROFLOT TICKETING PRACTICES

REF: A) STATE 170989; B) MOSCOW 10432 AND PREVIOUS

1. POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND ACTING ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DELIVERED NOTE AS GIVEN REF A TO V.G.KOMPLEKTOV, ACTING CHIEF OF USA DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT 11:30 A.M., JULY 13. AT BEGINNING OF MEETING POLITICAL COUNSELOR WENT OVER MAIN POINTS PRESENTED IN REF A, EMPHASIZING IN PARTICULAR LAST PARAGRAPH IN NOTE (PARA SIX IN REF A).

2. AFTER READING NOTE, KOMPLEKTOV ASKED FOR EXPLANATION OF LAST PARAGRAPH. SPECIFICALLY, WHAT DID U.S. GOVERNMENT MEAN BY WORDS "WHILE CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT WILL REQUIRE THAT THE U.S. AUTHORITIES CONSIDER APPLYING APPROPRIATE RESTRICTIONS ON AEROFLOT'S ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES". POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT WHILE WE HAD NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS POINT, DURING RECENT DISCUSSIONS OF THIS SUBJECT IN MOSCOW CHAIRMAN OF U.S. DELEGATION HAD POINTED OUT THAT IF SOVIET VIOLATIONS CONTINUE THE U.S. MIGHT HAVE TO CANCEL SOME OF THE RIGHTS NOW ENJOYED BY AEROFLOT IN THE UNITED STATES.

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 11048 131626Z

3. KOMPLEKTOV THEN LAUNCHED INTO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS MUCH

MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF SOVIET²⁷S. COOPERATION IN CIVIL AVIATION RELATIONS. LAST SEPTEMBER, HE SAID, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE U.S. CIVIL AVIATION BOARD HAD KNOCKED DOWN A THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT WHICH AEROFLOT AND PAN AM HAD CONCLUDED AFTER LONG NEGOTIATIONS. THIS WAS HARDLY A CONTRIBUTION TO BILATERAL COOPERATION, AND AS A RESULT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION THE ENTIRE ISSUE OF GOOD CIVIL AIR RELATIONS, WITHIN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF FAVORABLE SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS, WAS STILL UNSETTLED.

4. POLITICAL COUNSELOR ASKED WHETHER KOMPLEKTOV WERE DRAWING A CONNECTION BETWEEN BREAKDOWN OF TALKS LAST SEPTEMBER AND CURRENT SOVIET TICKETING VIOLATIONS DESCRIBED IN OUR NOTE. KOMPLEKTOV REPLIED THERE WAS NO CONNECTION WHATSOEVER BETWEEN THE TWO.

5. KOMPLEKTOV THEN SCOFFED AT THE EXAMPLES OF AEROFLOT TICKETING VIOLATIONS AND WHAT HE TERMED "OTHER TECHNICALITIES" MENTIONED IN THE NOTE, CLAIMING THAT THEY WERE PETTY DETAILS (MELKIVE VOPROSY), NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR CONSIDERATION AT A HIGH LEVEL.

6. POLITICAL COUNSELOR REITERATED THAT TICKETING VIOLATIONS ARE REGARDED AS SERIOUS MATTER BY U.S. GOVERNMENT AND ARE IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION TO ARTICLE XIV OF 1966 U.S.-USSR AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT. CONSEQUENTLY WE CANNOT PERMIT THIS PRACTICE TO CONTINUE.

7. COMMENT. DESPITE KOMPLEKTOV'S DELIBERATE EFFORTS TO BYPASS ENTIRE TICKETING ISSUE, THE SOVIETS HAVE NOW BEEN MADE AWARE OF GRAVITY WITH WHICH WE VIEW AEROFLOT VIOLATIONS, AND ARE ALSO INFORMED THAT U.S. MAY TAKE SPECIFIC ACTIONS WHICH WILL AFFECT AEROFLOT'S OPERATIONS IN U.S. UNLESS IMMEDIATE CORRECTIVE STEPS ARE TAKEN. MATLOCK

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